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ABSTRACT

The interactional competence of 12 kindergarten children was studied through naturalistic research of their sociodramatic play in a classroom context. Data were collected by both videotape and trained observers. Contextual and interactional information was analyzed according to an Interactional Competency Checklist (ICC) designed by the author. This analysis indicated that the children demonstrated competency in several areas: (1) The children demonstrated the ability to adapt to changes in the communicative setting: that is, they were able to adjust to the various themes of play and to extend the organization of the plot and character development: (2) The children indicated the ability to use nonverbal behavior (gestures, facial expressions, body movements, and vocal intonation and stress) in appropriate situations: (3) The children demonstrated familiarity with normal constraints and conditions of conversation, that is, knowledge of who can speak first or next, topics that are socially relevant, and how to terminate, repair, recycle or repeat an exchange: and (4) The children demonstrated the ability to sequence: that is, to think back or reflect upon previous experiences from multiple sources including those in the setting and to link past experience with present and possible future informational events, objects and resources within the communicative setting. (Author/SS)

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THE DOCUMENTATION OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN'S INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCY IN AN INFORMAL CONTEXT OF THE CLASSROOM

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Drawing either directly or indirectly upon the theoretical contributions of Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934), current literature suggests that language and the various functions of language are used from birth in the social or interactive context with family and significant others (Sullivan, 1953; Skinner, 1957; Strauss, 1962; Brown, 1971; Doughty, 1972; Lewis and Cherry, 1975). As the child attends to this social interaction and participates in it, he/she learns what Hymes (1971) has referred to as "communicative competence." Communicative competence underlies our language, social, and cognitive behavior in face to face interaction situations, Hymes (1971) contends that normal children acquire knowledge of sentence structure not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. This phenomenon is not explained in transformational grammar which separates linguistic theory into two parts, linguistic competence and linguistic performance.

Linguistic competence refers to the speaker's knowledge of grammar "thus severing it at once both from knowledge and from whatever else besides knowledge (e.g. motivation, identification, experience) may be involved in using knowledge" (Hymes, 1972, p. XXXV). On the other hand, linguistic performance is seen as an imperfect manifestation of an underlying system essentially concerned with psychological by-products of grammar (Hymes, 1971, p. 5). Consequently, Hymes says that a speaker's competence is itself a matter of adequate performance in that the speaker demonstrates his/her ability to select and use particular communicative means in appropriate contexts (Hymes, 1972).

Cicourel (1972) appears to refer to the same phenomenon as Hymes, but calls it "interactional competence." Cicourel (1973) defines interactional competence as does this investigation as the "ability to recognize, receive, process, and generate communicational procedures (which are at the same time informational resources) while simultaneously integrating and elaborating our thinking and reaction to these activities in the act of production and comprehension" (Cicourel, 1972, p. 213). He further elaborates:

> The ethnography or ethnographic context of speaking (Gumperz & Hymes, 1964; Gumperz, 1971) implies that the social setting is an integral part of semantic processing, and that normative conversational rules (Sacks, 1970; Schlegloff, 1969) exist whereby participants trade on implicit socialization experiences for deciding when and how the selection and generation of different lexical items or strings will occur (Cicourel, 1972, p. 216).

Cicourel describes seven properties which provide a link between sociolinguistic and cognitive properties which appear to be basically relevant for the kind of interactional competence necessary for production of everyday social structures. In order to achieve adult interactional competence, children must acquire a "facility" with these seven properties.

Mishler (1976) suggests that young children, and particularly, first graders are "conversationally competent." In his research, he found that first grade children and adults do not differ significantly in the length of their utterances which include questions. Mishler further states that these children have the ability to vary speech style in accord with varying characteristics of setting, content, and other speakers, a well known criterion of sociolinguistic competence. A third example of first graders' conversational competence was evident in their use of quite complex conversational rules and strategies. In adult conversation,

features such as turn taking, repair, and recycling have been studied by Harvey Sacks and others, (1974). Mishler found similar features in first grade children's speech. Announcements or topic initiators were often marked by repairs, recycles, or repeats, which serve the function of getting the listener's attention. Often these repeats have been considered a sign of poor fluency or inadequate linguistic control. Mishler suggests just the opposite in that the repetition of the opening phrase promotes better understanding and thus should be viewed as a sign of conversational competence. Furthermore, first grade children's use of appropriate stress, intonation, and terminal politeness exchanges would also suggest that they are conversationally competent. This corroborates Bernstein's (1972) idea that children demonstrate oral language competency in contexts that they know. Consequently, it would appear that there is some basis for suggesting that children of five or six years of age are, for the most part, competent interactionally in <u>familiar</u> social environments.

Young children are frequently assessed by oral language evaluation. Most methods of oral language assessment occur within formal school settings, in particular, the standardized testing environment, and take into consideration only the grammatical component of children's communicative competence. This procedure poses definite limitations in the assessment of oral language ability due to (1) the artificiality of the standardized testing environment, (2) the biases (cultural and other) existent on formal oral language instruments, and (3) the narrow definition of oral language competence in that it concerns only the grammatical

component and neglects the interactional. Since it is ultimately the child's ability to use appropriate language in particular communicative settings which determines his/her interactional competence, it only seems logical that oral language assessment includes the social and interactive context. Therefore, it would seem important to have an assessment tool which can be utilized within the classroom context to evaluate children's interactional competence.

This particular research focused upon children's emerging interactional competence and its documentation. Do young children use and possess adult strategies of interaction? Is it possible to develop an instrument which will document these emerging patterns of interaction? These are questions which the investigation attempted to explore.

Methodology

The data for this study were collected at a private school and involved the entire kindergarten class of twelve students. The tremendous amount of data obtained in naturalistic research on language necessitates small populations (see Piaget, 1955 and 1962; Brown and Bellugi, 1964; Miller and Ervin, 1964, and Bloom, 1970). When the study began, the age of the five boys and seven girls ranged from 4.8 - 5.8. Ten of the subjects were white, one was black, and one was oriental, with the majority of children coming from professional families.

The sociodramatic area was selected as the particular context in which to observe and record language because the context of this environment stimulates the interaction necessary for an analysis of

interactional competence and also because the setting could be more easily controlled for accoustical and observational purposes than other areas of the classroom. Specifically, the sociodramatic area is defined as that area within the kindergarten classroom set up with a variety of real and minature props and materials to aid children in their sociodramatic play and simultaneous oral language production (Black, 1979). The sociodramatic area provides the opportunity for children to imitate adult roles providing a good environment in which to analyze children's knowledge of those roles, behaviors and communicative processes. In short, it would appear that if children are given the opportunity to interact in environments (such as the sociodramatic) over which they exercise some control, their response tends to be more reflective of their true interactional competence (Bernstein, 1972).

The twelve subjects were grouped into four groups of three, and each group was videotaped for approximately 30 minutes in the sociodramatic area. Two tape recorders were used to supplement the audio from the videotape recorder. The researcher functioned as the observer within the sociodramatic area and noted the following conditions while the subjects were being recorded: (1) The person or persons with whom the subject was/were interacting and communicating; (2) the content of the conversation including specific words and/or phrases, (3) nonverbal gestures, body movements, and facial expressions; and (4) material used by the subjects in their sociodramatic play. There was no attempt on the part of the researcher to interact with the children, and she responded briefly to the few requests of the children.

After the four recording observing periods, each of the four tapes was transcribed by the researchers within a twenty-four to forty-eight hour period. After the oral language samples were transcribed and checked, the contextual information was compiled from the videotapes and included with the oberver's notes. The contextual and interactional information was then analyzed according to the Interactional Competency Checklist (ICC) which was designed by the researcher. The checklist was based upon (1) the rationale that oral language develops, is practiced, and utilized in the social or interactive context (Strauss, 1962; Hymes, 1971; Lewis and Cherry, 1975); (2) Hymes's (1974) idea that a speaker's competence is in itself a matter of adequate performance in that the speaker demonstrates his/her ability to select and use appropriate communicative means in particular contexts; and (3) Cicourel's (1972) seven properties of interactional competence which were adapted to the context of the sociodramatic environment. The ICC will be discussed in greater detail in the following section on data analysis.

Data Analysis

Table 1 demonstrates that the sociodramatic area of the kindergarten classroom provided an environment in which the researcher was able to document the subjects' interactional competency as categorized by the ICC.

Insert Table I

The following discussion of the ICC also indicates as Mishler (1976) and Bernstein (1972) suggest that young children do indeed possess, or are developing, interactional competence.

Ability to Adapt to Changes in the Setting. The first of four categories in the ICC is the Ability to Adapt to Changes in the Setting which refers to the child's ability to adjust to the various themes of play, extend the organization of the plot and character development within the sociodramatic area. The following sequences provide documentation for this particular category.

In this sequence selected for analysis Tai (T) cooks while Mike (M) and Mikey (Mi) play doctor. M throws the medicine bottle into T's cooking bowl. This evolves into the theme of M and Mi throwing props into the waste basket. T cooks pudding, tea, and sets the table for Mi and M to eat.

Transcription	Description
(1) T-M&Mi: OK, I set the table.	T walks back to Mi and M at the waste basket.
(2) M-Mi: Oh boy! Hey, look what I did.	M, Mi, and T look in the waste basket full of props.
(3) Mi-M: Telephone! M&Mi: Laughter	
(4) T-M&Mi: Quit it.	Mi walks to the telephone table, picks up the phone and throws it to M. M puts it into the waste basket.
(5) M-Mi: I got it! (the telephone)	
(6) T-M&Mi: You guys are always causing me trouble. So please don't!	T has her arms folded. Mi stops and looks at T.

(7) M-Mi: Sit, sit down.

M and Mi walk toward the kitchen table. T thinks M and Mi are coming to eat.

(8) Mi-M: Sit down. Which way now?

(9) T-M&Mi: OK.

T seems to indicate to M and Mi that they should begin to eat.

(10) Mi-M: OK, now let me have it.

M takes the cup that Mi wants. Mi takes the tablecloth off the table. Most of the dishes fall on the floor.

(11) T-M: OK. Not yet.

M starts for the wastebasket.

(12) M-Mi: Oh, I got it.

M puts the cup in the waste basket.

(13) Mi-M: Look at those cups from the table.

(14) T-M&Mi: Thanks.

(15) M-Mi: Pudding's all gone.

M takes the pudding and throws it in the waste basket. Mi follows M. T returns to the stove.

(16) Mi-M: Look what you have. You have a lot of trash.

Mi points at the dishes and tablecloth lying on the floor.

(17) M-Mi: Oh boy! I'll throw it in the trash can. We're throwin' everything in the trash can.

M picks up the tablecloth and throws it into the waste basket. Mi picks up a saucer and throws it into the waste basket.

(18) T-M: How about the broom, after I sweep?

T lifts up the broom. Mi looks at T.

(19) M-T: Yah, let me have it. M turns and walks toward T.

(20) T-M: After I sweep. T begins to sweep. Mi picks up a wooden spoon and throws it into the waste basket.

In this particular sequence, Mi and M have created a theme of play which focuses upon throwing props from the sociodramatic area into the trash can. T is obviously frustrated and disgusted with their theme of play. She is not contributing to this theme and is trying to stop their behavior (4,6). T sets the table but does not want M or Mi to put the cups and plates into the trash just yet (11). Here there is a slight shift in T's attitude. It is now all right if M and Mi eventually dump the cups into the trash, but not immediately. Nevertheless, they do dump the cups into the trash (12, 13), and T responds (14) with a sarcastic, "Thanks." The very next time T speaks (18), she says to M, "How about the broom, after I sweep?" She has now decided M can have the broom to dump into the trash after she is finished sweeping. T is now supporting the on-going theme, that of dumping props into the trash. She now combines her "mothering-housewife" role (character extension) with the extension and organization of the plot, throwing props into the trash can. The following transcriptions extracted from this episode demonstrate T's ability to adapt to changes in the setting.

Then throw that (tool kit) in the trash.

Throw that stove in the trash.

Now we can get my stuff just about in (the waste basket).

Here's something (a dish for the trash).

Here's an apple (for the trash can).

Nonverbal Appropriateness. Nonverbal Appropriateness is the second category of the ICC and refers to the child's use of gestures, facial expressions, body movements, intonation and stress.

Description of Behavior	Documentation & Explanation
(1) T-M: Yes we do! (have a dog) T nods affirmatively while continuing to cook.	(intonation and stress, body movements)
(2) T-M: Thanks. (T has just set the table. M has removed a cup from the table and thrown it into the trash.)	(sarcastic intonation and facial expression of disgust)
(3) T-M: She wants, she doesn't want to sit down, and she wants to sit there. T motions to the high chair.	(gesture)
(4) G-M: Smell this Megan. G holds out the perfume ring and points to it.	(gesture and body movement)
(5) G-C: Ouch!	(body movement, intonation and stress, facial expression)

The above transcriptions and descriptions indicate that young children do use appropriate nonverbal behavior and that it is possible to document this behavior and assess its appropriateness within the communicative context.

Familiarity with Normal Constraints and Conditions. Familiarity with Normal Constraints and Conditions is the third category of the ICC and refers to the child's knowledge of such items as who can speak first or next, interrogatives, repair, recycling, repeating, topics socially relevant, and how to terminate an exchange.

(1) Who can speak first or next?

Following are some examples of the types of interactions which indicate that young children have a knowledge of who can speak first or next.

---

(1) G-M&C: Well, time to go trick or treating. Now where's that mask at?

Where's the mask at? Where did that mask disappear to?

Where's the mask?

(2) M-G: What mask?

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(3) G-M: That, this mask. (the one that goes with his costume)

(4) M-G: Look around the house and find it. Maybe it's behind that table.

(5) G-M: It was behind that table. That's where it was.

(6) T-M&Mi: You guys want pudding or cake?

(7) M-T: Pudding and cake.

(8) T-M: I can only make one.

(9) M-T: Uh, hum pu-pudding. Ugh!

(10) T-M: OK.

(11) Mi-T: Pudding, yah!

(12) T-M&Mi: All right, pudding.

As was demonstrated in the preceding episodes, young children do facilitate the interactive process in that they appear to possess the knowledge of turn taking in conversation. G and M also demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate time to responsd in a conversational setting (1-5). G begins by asking question (1). M indicates a knowledge of turn taking by responding with a question (2) which requests further information from G. G understands that it is his turn to respond and provides the requested additional information (3). M then takes her turn and provides G with a plan of action and some information (4). G then follows M's suggestion which answered his initial question (1). He then takes his turn to acknowledge M's suggestion and to announce that he has found the mask (5). In the sequence (6-12), T begins by asking a question involving a choice (6). M's response indicates that he realizes that it is his turn to respond. His response is not quite what T requested in that she asked if M and Mi wanted pudding or cake (6). She then takes her turn and makes the clarifying response (8). M and Mi then respond to her statement of clarification (9, 11). T again demonstrates her knowledge of turn taking in her response to both M (10) and Mi (12) after M and Mi have provided the information which T had requested. Much of turn taking involves the use of questions, responses and clarifying questions. The use of interrogatives is the second subcategory under the category of familiarity with normal constraints and conditions.

(2) Interrogatives:

Questions are catalysts for continued conversation and interaction. Following are examples of several of the children's facility in the use of interrogatives.

(1) T-M&Mi: You guys want pudding or cake?

(2) M-T: Pudding and cake.

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(3) M-G&C: What's the matter, kids?

(4) C-M: I ain't no kid. I'm the mother.

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(5) C-G: I'll, I'll be the nurse, OK?

(6) G-C: Okeedoekee, and I'll be the doctor. Don't forget.

The preceding episodes demonstrate that the children were able to use questions and evoke appropriate responses from the individual or individuals with whom they were interacting. In episodes (1, 2), T asks M and Mi a specific question (1), and she is able to evoke a response which is appropriate (2). M asks a question (3) which provides information to M. In episode (5-6), C asks G a tag question (5) which evokes an appropriate response from G (6). Thus, it would appear that young children have a facility with the use of interrogatives in that they are able to evoke logical and appropriate responses from others in the interactive context.

(3) Repair, Recycling, and Repeating

These three conditions serve the purpose of soliciting attention to the speaker and the content of the speaker's language. Documentation of the children's facility with these conditions follows:

(1) M-T: Here baby, I'm gonna throw your little baby in the trash can. Good little baby.

(2) T-M: She wants, she doesn't want to sit down, and she wants to sit there.

(3) M-Mi&T: Hey where's something else?

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(4) G-M: Now where's that mask at? Where's that mask at? Where did that mask disappear to? Where's the mask?

(5) M-G: What mask?

(6) G-M: That, this mask.

(7) E-J: Yah, well we, Jonathan, why don't you decorate the tree and then you can help. Dec, decorate the tree and then you can cut. Then you can cut. (J is cutting wrapping paper. E wants him to decorate the tree first).

(8) J-E: I'll get some jewelry. This is to put on the tree.

From the preceding sequences, it would appear that young children "understand" the function of repair, recycling, and repeating and are able to obtain recognition or response when they use this technique. In episode (1-3), T responds to M's threat to put her baby in the trash (2). In this response, she recycles and repairs adding emphasis that the baby does not want to be thrown in the trash. The next time M responds he wants to know where something else is that he can throw in the trash (3). Evidently the recycling and repairing in T's response have convinced him that the baby is not to be thrown in the trash and that he had best look elsewhere for more items to put in the waste basket. G's initial question (4) in the episode (4-6) contains repetition and recycling which draw attention to G and his problem of

finding the mask. In (5) M responds appropriately to G's question. Again demonstrating G's effective use of techniques of repetition and recycling. In episode (7-8), E (7) repeats, recycles, and repairs in her attempt to stop J from wrapping presents and begin decorating the tree. She is obviously effective in knowing how to get her message to J as he stops wrapping presents and begins to decorate the tree (8).

(4) Topics Socially Relevant

In T's case, most of the topics pertained to her two contributions to the theme of play through "mothering" and through throwing props in the trash can. The first items listed pertain to the roles of housewife and mother while the second list concerns the filling of the trash can.

Housewife, mothering topic:

That's OK. I'm making it for the dog.

There's no more butter. I need the eggs.

I'm gonna clean the refrigerator.

You guys better clean up. You know what? He's coming for dinner.

Topics pertaining to filling the trash can:

Throw the stove in the waste basket.

Don't throw the spoons in.

How about the baby's chair?

For G, most of the topics concerned the two themes of doctoring and Halloween.

Doctor topics:

Is the baby sick?

No, we're gonna have to give her medicine.

I hurt her a little. Gotta put the band-aid on.

Halloween topics:

Well, time to go trick or treating.

Now where's that mask at? Where's that mask at?

Yah, I'm going (to the Halloween party) on a witch's broom.

Somebody's going to lose their britches. That's a trick.

For J, most of the topics concerned the theme of Christmas.

Christmas topics:

This is to put on the tree.

Hey, where's my list? Where's my list?

How do you spell Merry Christmas?

I'm Santa Claus and I'm writing.

(5) How to Terminate an Exchange:

Knowledge of how to conclude conversation or interaction is observed when T prepares to go shopping.

(1) T-M&Mi: I'm going shopping.

(2) Mi-G: Bye.

(3) T-Mi: Bye, bye.

G indicates his knowledge of how to conclude a conversation with M as he prepares to go on a Halloween date via a witch's broom.

(4) M-G: Are you going on a date?

(5) G-M: Yea, I'm going on a witch's broom. You, you too? Up we go. Yea, Halloween!

(6) M-G: Halloween's so fun!

(7) G: Shoom!

(8) M-G: Bye.

(9) G-M: Bye.

B also demonstrated a knowledge of how to terminate a conversational sequence.

(10) M-B&G: We made a mess of the playhouse.

(11) G-M: Ooo, Ben did it.

(12) M-G&B: And we've been breakin' stuff in the playhouse.

(13) B-M&G: We've been breakin' stuff. We've been breakin' stuff.

(14) G-B: Ben, don't.

(15) G-B&M: Good bye. I'm going off to King's Island.

In episode (4-9), G takes off on his broom (7). M responds by terminating their exchange (8) and then G also responds with a terminating exchange (9). They both mutually understand that G is leaving and appropriately terminate the conversation. Peer pressure evidently causes B to terminate a conversation in episode (10-15). According to G (11), B has been the major cause in creating a mess in the sociodramatic area. B finally responds to the accusation by terminating the conversation. (15). How to terminate an exchange when someone's talk is insulting is one of the abilities described in Circourel's third property of interactional competence. It would appear that B understands and uses this technique.

Sequencing. Sequencing is the fourth category of the ICC and refers to the child's ability to think back or reflect upon previous experiences

from multiple sources including those in the setting and to link past experiences with present and possible future informational events, objects, and resources within the communicative setting. Following are documentations of several children's ability to draw on past experiences and relate them appropriately to the ongoing interaction in the socio-dramatic area.

Description of Behavior	Documentation and Explanation
(1) You guys are always causing me trouble, so please don't.	(M and Mi have been taking T's cooking props. T has a prior understanding of "trouble.")
(2) Those are women's shoes.	(This statement suggests that Tai has a knowledge of differentation between men's and women's shoes.)
(3) You guys better clean up. You know what? He's coming for dinner.	(T is aware that it is socially appropriate to clean up before having guests.)
(4) What's wrong and what's the problem?	(G demonstrates a knowledge of a doctor's examining procedure.)
(5) No, we're gonna have to give her medicine.	(G knows that if someone is sick medicine is often part of the treatment.)
(6) I hurt her a little. Gotta put a band-aid on.	(G knows that the appropriate procedure for protecting wounds includes application of a band-aid.)

(7) You look like a real witch.	(G is aware of those aspects of appearance which make someone look like a witch.)
(8) Someone's gonna lose their britches. That's a trick.	(G appears to know about Halloween tricks and pranks.)
(9) Yah, well we, Jonathan, why don't you decorate the tree and then you can help. Dec, decorate the tree and then you can cut. Then you can cut (the wrapping paper.)	(E knows that the tree should be decorated first before presents are placed under it.)
(10) Looks like we'll have to get some right up here.	(E seems to be aware that the proper procedure for decorating a Christmas tree involves a fairly even distribution of ornaments.)
(11) I betcha my present's gonna be wrapped right.	(E knows there is a proper way to wrap presents.)

From the above presentation of data, it appears that young children are able to think back or reflect upon previous experiences from multiple sources and to link or use them with present and possible future informational events, objects, and resources within the communicative setting. For example, in (4, 5, and 6) G brings information from past experiences of his own visits to the doctor. He uses his prior knowledge to carry out his portrayal of the doctor which facilitates the interactive process

in the sociodramatic environment. Similarly, E's direction to J to decorate the tree first (9) refocused his attention on interaction with the others in the group decorating the tree. E's observation (10) of the bare spot and what should be done about it also prompted interaction involving getting a chair to reach it and discussion about who was going to use it. In (11) E's indication of a proper procedure for wrapping presents stimulated interaction concerning how to wrap presents. Thus, it would appear that young children do use past information in the present interactive context and that this process facilitates the interactive process.

Conclusions and Implications

The above presentation of data involving the ICC indicates that it is possible to observe and document the young child's emerging interactional competency. From this analysis, it would appear that young children are capable of demonstrating interactional competence in familiar environments over which they exercise control.

More specifically, the kindergarten children demonstrated competency in the following areas.

(1) The children demonstrated the ability to adapt to changes in the setting in that they adjusted to the changes in themes of play, extended the organization of the plot and character development. This indicates that young children can "behave as if they share the same social setting and are receiving and processing the same information" and "can normalize discrepancies to sustain social interaction" (Cicourel, 1972; 217-18, second and fourth property of interactional competence).

(2) The children indicated the ability to use nonverbal behavior (gestures, facial expressions, body movements, and vocal intonation and stress) in appropriate situations. This indicates young children's awareness and possession of "normal form" repertoires of possible "appearances, behaviors, and utterances that can be expressed or understood when emergent in contextually organized settings" (Cicourel, 1972; 217-18, fourth property of interactional competence). In addition, this corroborates Mishler's (1976) research which documents first grader's use of appropriate stress and intonation.

(3) The children demonstrated familiarity with normal constraints and conditions of conversation, that is, a knowledge of who can speak first or next, topics socially relevant, how to terminate an exchange, repair, recycling, and repeating. (Cicourel, 1972; 217-18, third property of interactional competence: Schleghoff and Sacks, 1973, 1974; and Mishler, 1976.)

(4) The children demonstrated the ability to sequence, that is, to think back or reflect upon previous experiences from multiple sources including those in the setting and to link past experience with present and possible future informational events, objects, and resources within the communicative setting (Cicourel, 1972; 217-18, first and sixth properties of interactional competence).

Results from this study pose some questions concerning the narrowness of formal testing with the generally exclusive emphasis upon grammatical competence. It also raises the issue of children's competence or incompetence. Frequently, children's performance is labeled immature or

incompetent. Data from this study seems to suggest that young children, by ages five and six, are developing interactional competence to a substantial degree.

This research suggests that classroom teachers need to become more aware of the importance of interactional competence in social contexts, particularly the classroom. This implies that teachers need to become better observers and documenters of emerging patterns of development while increasing their awareness of the valuable information contained in more informal social contexts of the classroom.

In addition, this study supports that body of research which documents the importance of the effect of social environments in that familiarity with an environment facilitates interactional competency. Furthermore, this study seems to suggest that many competencies necessary to functioning as a member of a social group are learned through interaction in informal social environments. A question may be asked concerning the practice of teacher dominated, formalized instruction between children and their exposure to diverse environments. Possibly this practice actually impedes the learning processes and the development of social and interactional skills.

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Table 1

VERIFICATION OF THE INTERACTIONAL COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Subject	Nonverbal Appropriateness	Ability to Adapt	Familiarity with Constraints	Sequencing
A	yes	yes	yes	yes
B	yes	yes	yes	yes
C	yes	yes	yes	yes
D	yes	yes	yes	yes
E	yes	yes	yes	yes
F	yes	yes	yes	yes
G	yes	yes	yes	yes
H	yes	yes	yes	yes
I	yes	yes	yes	yes
J	yes	yes	yes	yes
K	yes	yes	yes	yes
L	yes	yes	yes	yes

*yes denotes the researcher's documentation.